STATEMENTS BY MINISTER ...(Contd.)

Follow up Action on Recommendations of Sachar Committee

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A. R. ANTULAY): Hon. Deputy Chairman, Sir, as there was lack of authentic information about the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India, a High Level Committee was constituted on 9th March, 2005 under the chairmanship of Justice Rajinder Sachar to prepare a comprehensive report on this subject. The report was prepared after detailed and wide ranging consultation with State Governments, non-Governmental organizations, universities and academic bodies, intellectuals, women, youth and specialized organisations and bodies of the Central Government.

2. The High Level Committee (popularly known as the Sachar Committee) submitted its report on 17th November, 2006. The report was tabled in both Houses of Parliament on 30th November, 2006.

3. The Sachar Committee brought out the stark reality about the condition of the Muslim community. The salient findings of the Sachar Committee are at Annexure.

4. The recommendations of the Sachar Committee have been considered by Government and a decision has been taken regarding the follow up action. The salient features are as follows:-

(i) Targeted intervention is proposed for improvement of basic amenities and employment opportunities in 90 identified minority concentration districts which are backward in terms of various developmental parameters.

Appropriate measures will be taken to improve the deficiency in civic amenities and economic opportunities in 338 identified towns and cities with a substantial population of minorities. An inter-Ministerial task force is already working on this to recommend appropriate strategies in this regard.

An inter-Ministerial group has been constituted to plan and monitor the implementation of a comprehensive programme for skill and entrepreneurship development among the Muslim community and for ensuring easy and smooth access to credit to the minorities. "Clusters", having a substantial presence of the Muslim community, especially of those engaged in artisanal activities, will be given focussed attention. The group has commenced its deliberations.

Public sector banks will open more branches in Muslim concentration areas, financial institutions will promote micro-finance among the minorities, especially women, public sector banks will monitor the disposal of loan applications for minorities and maintain reasons for rejection, Reserve Bank of India will maintain district-wise and bank-wise data regarding disposal of applications on its website and the flow of credit to minorities, would be monitored regularly. The data can be accessed under the Right to Information Act. Efforts will be made for stepping up priority sector lending to minorities from the present level to 15% over a period of three years.

A multi-pronged strategy will be adopted for addressing the problem of educational backwardness of the Muslim community. The outreach of upper primary schools will be expanded, particularly for Muslim girls, and where necessary, with "girls only" schools, more Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) will be opened in areas with substantial Muslim population; priority would be given to the opening of secondary and senior secondary schools in areas of Muslim concentration, a special literacy drive will be taken up in districts with a substantial population of Muslims, Block Institutes of Teacher Education (BITEs) would be established to impart pre-service and in-service training to primary, upper primary and secondary level teachers in such areas, additional allocation will be made for opening women's hostels in schools and universities, the Madarsa modernization Programme will be revised to enhance the components eligible for assistance, the mid day meal scheme will be extended, especially in educationally backward Muslim concentration blocks and the question of equivalence of qualifications from Madarsas for subsequent access to higher education will be addressed.

Three scholarship schemes are proposed exclusively for the minurities, A merit-cum-means scholarship scheme for 20,000 students from the minority communities for pursuing technical and professional courses has been approved already. The other two, viz., a pre-matric and a post-matric scholarship scheme will be introduced shortly. A revised coaching and remedial tuition scheme has been approved to improve the employability and academic performance of students belonging to the minority communities. Guidelines have been issued already to improve the representation of minorities, in Government, public sector enterprises, public sector banks etc. The Corpus of the Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) would be augmented and its operations expanded and streamlined.

Dissemination of information regarding health and family welfare schemes will be done in Urdu and regional languages and in such districts, blocks and towns with a substantial minority population.

A comprehensive amendment of the Wakf Act is proposed to address existing deficiencies at the earliest.

A suitable agency would soon assist in the development of wakf properties so that the augmented income could be utilized for the purposes intended.

All personnel, like Government employees, teachers, health personnel would be sensitized to the importance of diversity and social inclusion.

Civil Rights Centres will be opened in universities, beginning with Central universities.

A High Level Committee has been constituted to review the Delimitation Act and the concerns expressed by the Sachar Committee regarding anomalies in the representation of Muslims have been considered by this Committee.

It has been decided in principle to set up an Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) to look into grievances regarding discrimination. An expert group will study and recommend its (EOC's) structure and functions.

In order to promote diversity and social inclusion in educational institutions, work places and living spaces, an expert group has been constituted to propose an appropriate "diversity index". Such an index can be the basis for providing incentives for better representation in all three areas mentioned above.

A National Data Bank (NDB) and an autonomous Assessment and Monitoring Authority (AMA) will be soon set up which will analyse the data so generated and suggest appropriate policies to Government on a continuous basis.

ANNEXURE

SALIENT FINDINGS OF THE SACHAR COMMITTEE

(i) Education:

(a) The literacy rate among Muslims was 59.1 %, which was below the national average of 64.8 %.

(b) The Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) is lower compared to the average MYS for all children.

(c) 25% of Muslim children in the age of 6 - 14 year age group have either never attended school or have dropped out.

(d) The majority of Muslim girls and boys fail in their matriculation examination or drop out before that.

(e) Less than 4% of Muslims are graduates or diploma holders compared to about 7% of the population aged 20 years and above.

(f) There is a strong desire and enthusiasm for education among Muslim women and girls across the board.

(g) Schools beyond primary level are few in Muslim localities. Exclusive schools for girls are fewer.

(h) Lack of hostel facilities is a limiting factor, especially for girls.

(i) Muslim parents are not averse to modern or mainstream education and to sending their children to affordable Government schools. They do not necessarily prefer to send children to madarsas. However, the access to Government schools for Muslim children is limited.

(ii) Skill development:

(a) Skill development initiatives for those who have not Completed school education may be particularly relevant for some sections of Muslims given their occupational structure.

(bj The skill demands in the manufacturing and service sectors are changing continuously and youth with middle school education would meet these needs.

(c) A rehabilitation package for innovative re-skilling and for upgrading the occupational structure in the wake of liberalization is seen as an urgent need.

(iii) Employment and economic opportunities:

(a) Self-employment is the main source of income of Muslims. They are engaged more in self-employed manufacturing and trade activities compared to others.

(b) The share of Muslim workers engaged in street vending is the highest. More than 12 per cent of Muslim male workers are engaged in street vending as compared to the national average of less than 8 per cent.

(c) The percentage of women Muslim workers undertaking work within their own homes is much larger at 70 per cent compared to all workers at 51 per cent.

(d) The share of Muslims in the total workers engaged in the tobacco and textiles/garment related industries are quite significant.

(e) The share of Muslim workers in production related activities and transport equipment operation is much higher at 34%, as against 21 % of all workers.

(f) More than 16 per cent of Muslims were engaged as sales workers, while the national average was only about 10 per cent.

(g) While the participation of Muslim workers is relatively higher in production and sales related occupations, their participation was relatively lower in professional, technical, clerical and to some extent managerial work.

(h) Muslims, by and large, are engaged in the unorganized sector of the economy and have to bear the brunt of liberalization.

(i) The participation of Muslims in regular salaried jobs is much less than workers of other socio-religious categories.

(j) Muslims are relatively more vulnerable in terms of conditions of work as their concentration in informal sector employment is higher and their job conditions, even among regular workers, are less for Muslims than those of other socio-religious communities.

Percentage of households availing banking facilities is much lower in villages where the share of Muslim population is high.

(iv) Poverty and development:

(a) About 38 % of Muslims in urban areas and 27 % in rural areas live below the poverty level.

(b) Muslims are concentrated in locations with poor infrastructure facilities. This affects their access to basic services like education, health facilities, transport, etc.

(c) About a third of small villages with high concentration of Muslims do not have any educational institutions.

(d) There is a scarcity of medical facilities in larger villages with a substantial Muslim concentration. About 40% of large villages with a substantial Muslim concentration do not have any medical facilities.

(e) Muslim concentration villages are not well served with pucca roads.

(f) Policies to deal with the relative deprivation of the Muslims in the country should sharply focus on inclusive development and mainstreaming of the community while respecting diversity.

(v) Social conditions:

(a) A community-specific factor toe low educational achievement is that Muslims do not see education as necessarily translating into formal employment.

(b) The Muslim population shows an increasingly better sex ratio compared with other socio-religious communities.

(c) Infant and childhood mortality among Muslims is slightly lower than the average.

(d) There has been a large decline in fertility in all the religious groups including Muslims.

... (Interruptions)...

Re. Flood situation ...(Contd.)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We will now continue with title Short Duration Discussion. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA (Jharkhand): The Parliament has to give us protection." ...*(Interruptions)*... The House has to give us protection. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have given notice for suspension of Question Hour. ...*(Interruptions)*... That was a Question Hour matter. ...*(Interruptions)*... There is no notice pending now. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज (मध्य प्रदेश) : यह माननीय संसद की अवमानना हैं ...(**व्यवधान**)... उन्होंने यह करके पूरे विपक्ष को अनदेखा किया हैं ...(**व्यवधान**)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Government has replied. ...*(Interruptions)*... यह तो इम्पोर्टेन्ट पार्लियामोंट्री बिजनेस करके करेंगे ...(**व्यवधान**)... होम मिनिस्टर को तो बोलने दीजिए ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज : यह माननीय संसद की अवमानना हैं ...(**व्यवधान**)...